

2013 Retired Historic Preservation Review Board Members

By Bruce Whittenberg, Montana Historical Society Director

2013 Preservation Awards Ceremony

Myrna Loy Center, Helena

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I next want to acknowledge the work of the Montana State Preservation Review Board, by recognizing four recently retired board members. While only one can be with us today, all deserve mention and our appreciation.

Bob Valach, who cannot be here today, served on the Review Board from 2003 to 2011. Bob, a third-generation stone mason from Lewistown, has been instrumental in preserving historic buildings in Lewistown and across the state. Bob's intimate knowledge of stone work and masonry was vital to improving the draft National Register nominations. His expertise, his experience, and his personality were great assets to the Board.

Jeff Shelden, who also can't be here, served on the Board from 2010 to 2012. Jeff founded Prairie Wind Architecture in Lewistown in 1981. Prairie Wind's renovation of St. Margaret Catholic Church in Cut Bank recently won a Merit Award for Excellence from the Montana Chapter of the American Institute of Architects. Jeff left the Board in 2012 to take on a new career as a Foreign Service Officer in the U.S. Department of State. His tenure, although brief, was very meaningful to the Board.

Tim Light of the Flathead Valley served on the Review Board from 2004 to 2012. Tim received a Master's Degree from the University of Montana and has over 30 years of experience dealing with cultural resources in both the private and public sectors. Since 1998, Tim has served as the Forest Archaeologist for the Flathead National Forest. During his tenure, Tim provided the

Board his cultural resource expertise with both candor and insight. Tim will you please come forward to receive your service plaque?

Lastly, we wish to recognize and to remember **Donna Coate**, who served on the Review Board from 2008 to 2011. Sadly, Donna passed away this past November.

Donna Ruth Patrick was born in Hingham, Montana, in 1934. Her parents, Ralph and Ruth, moved their growing family to Helena in the 1940s, where Donna graduated from Helena High School in 1952. She immediately married her high school sweetheart, LeRoy Larson, with whom she had three children. Donna loved to tell stories of her life in Helena, including the exciting story of the 1959 earthquake, when she ran into the street in the darkness with her children - one an infant - to ride out the tremors. After her husband died in a tragic accident, Donna continued to work as a legal secretary to support her young family. She met and married Alfred Coate a few years later, and they had two children. In 1967, Judge Coate was appointed District Judge, and the family moved to Forsyth.

Donna flourished in her adopted home in Forsyth. We at the Montana Historical Society best knew her through her long-standing relationship with the Rosebud County Museum. Donna loved Montana history. She worked hard to encourage historic property owners to order National Register Signs in Forsyth's historic districts, and as a result, that town is one of the best-signed in the state. Often with her dear friend Sharon Lincoln, a Historical Society Trustee, Donna traveled across the state to attend the Board meetings, where she was always thoughtful and delightful, and also game to visit the local historic watering hole afterwards.

With her passing this past November, we along with her family and friends have faced a great loss, but we will remember this strong, smart, beautiful lady and her love and service to history.

At this time we invite Donna's son, **Lars Larson**, her daughter **Clarisse Roos**, and her granddaughter, **Emma Roos**, to come forward to accept a service plaque from the Governor in her memory.